

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Thursday, December 23, 2004*

## DC ENDING 2004 WITH FEWER AGGRESSIVE SPEEDERS, RED LIGHT RUNNERS AND TRAFFIC DEATHS

DC is closing out 2004 having recorded significant gains in the area of traffic safety—including fewer aggressive speeders, fewer red-light runners and, most importantly, fewer traffic deaths during the year. With just over a week to go in 2004, DC is on pace to record its fewest traffic fatalities in more than a decade. As of December 23, 43 people had been killed on DC roadways in 2004, a reduction of almost 37 percent from the 2003 total as of that date. There were 69 traffic fatalities in DC in all of 2003. The sharp decline in the city's traffic fatalities has coincided with continued reductions in aggressive speeding and red-light running in areas monitored by traffic safety cameras. In November, for the second month in a row, a record low 4 percent of all motorists passing through photo radar enforcement zones were found to be speeding aggressively. That compares with an aggressive speeding rate of 7 percent in January 2004 and a rate of more than 30 percent when the program began in July 2001. Similarly, the number of motorists running red lights at the 39 intersections equipped with traffic safety cameras has plummeted 75 percent since that program began more than five years ago. In November 2004, nearly 25,000 fewer red-light violations were captured at these intersections than were recorded at the beginning of the program. So far, more than 1.6 million photo-enforced Notices of Infraction have been mailed and nearly 1.2 million paid, resulting in fines of almost \$93 million. This level of consistent enforcement has freed up uniformed officers to concentrate on neighborhood patrols and other traffic safety priorities, including drunk driving and seat belt compliance.

- ① Get the latest DC traffic fatality figures at:  
<http://www.mpd.cdc.gov/info/traffic/trstats.shtm>
- ① The latest results on DC's photo radar program can be found at:  
[http://www.mpd.cdc.gov/info/traffic/speedresults\\_text.shtm](http://www.mpd.cdc.gov/info/traffic/speedresults_text.shtm)
- ① Details on the red-light camera intersection safety program are posted at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/redlight.shtm>

## MPDC OFFERS VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION TIPS DURING 2005 WASHINGTON AUTO SHOW

In addition to checking out the latest in new automobiles and accessories, visitors to the 2005 Washington Auto Show can get valuable information and resources on protecting their vehicles from theft—courtesy of the MPDC and the Maryland and Washington DC Anti-Car Theft (ACT) Committee. The Washington Auto Show runs from Sunday, December 26, 2004, through Sunday, January 2, 2005, in the Washington Convention Center. Members of the MPDC's Auto Theft Unit and other area law enforcement agencies will be passing out safety tips and information on how to reduce the chances of your vehicle being stolen. The Maryland and DC ACT Committee will have its "Hot Car" (Neon) on display, with demonstrations on how to protect your vehicles. While the number of automobiles stolen in DC has declined by about 10 percent in 2004, according to preliminary statistics, DC continues to have one of the highest auto theft rates in the nation. Auto thefts increased 47 percent between 1998 and 2003, when there were more than 9,500 reported offenses. To help reverse this trend, police will be encouraging motorists to sign up for "Watch Your Car," a national vehicle theft prevention program that both the MPDC and Maryland police agencies participate in.

- ① For more information about Watch Your Car in DC, and to register for the free, voluntary program, call (877) DC2-STOP or go online to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/programs/wyc.shtm>
- ① For information on the 2005 Washington Auto Show, visit:  
<http://www.washingtonautoshow.com>
- ① Even if you can't make it to the Auto Show, vehicle owners can get auto theft prevention tips on the MPDC website at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/autotheft.shtm>

## KEEPING YOUR HOLIDAY GIFTS SAFE AND SECURE: SOME COMMON-SENSE BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS

Burglars know that many households have new, and oftentimes expensive, items in their homes following the December holidays – computers and peripherals, stereo components, televisions, cameras and other electronic equipment. In too many cases, residents make it easy for burglars to figure out which homes to target by putting boxes that identify their new gifts in plain view with their other garbage. Avoid becoming an easy target for post-holiday burglars by not leaving boxes in the alley or other garbage pick-up locations for several days at a time. Instead, break down any boxes you are throwing out, put them in garbage bags and place them inside a trashcan. (In many cases, especially with computer equipment, you probably want to keep the boxes for safe storage, shipping or moving in the future.) Think about keeping broken-down boxes inside—in a garage, for example—until the evening before your regular garbage pick-up. Some burglars actually look inside garbage cans for evidence of holiday gifts. As a further precaution, write down the serial numbers and take photographs of your new possessions, or mark them with identifying information; this will aid in the recovery of your property in the event it is stolen.

## SPOTLIGHT ON ... THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES UNIT

Illegal dumping and other environmental crimes remain a serious concern in many DC neighborhoods. These crimes create significant safety hazards and negatively impact the quality of life in communities where the crimes occur. To combat the problem, the MPDC and the DC Department of Public Works established the Environmental Crimes Unit (ECU)—a collaborative partnership designed to provide maximum accountability to individuals or businesses responsible for the illegal dumping of waste on public and private property. The primary focus of the ECU is to conduct investigations of reported acts of illegal dumping, while working closely with the United States Attorney's Office in an effort to bring those responsible to a successful prosecution. The ECU also conducts ongoing community outreach and education for community groups, schools, other governmental agencies, and employees of both the MPDC and DPW.

## NEWS & NOTES

**SoberRide.** The Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is providing holiday revelers with free cab rides home (up to \$50) every day (8 pm to 4 am) from now through January 1. People can call the SoberRide program at (800) 200-TAXI (200-8294); Cingular Wireless customers can access the service by dialing #TAXI. More details at <http://www.soberride.com>.

**Hypothermia Watch.** The MPDC is once again participating in the District's Hypothermia Watch program, and encourages residents to get involved as well. For details about the program, click on <http://dhs.dc.gov/dhs/cwp/view,a,3,q,492649,dhsNav,|30980|.asp>.

**Visitor Parking Permits.** Expecting out-of-town guests this holiday season who need to park their vehicles in a zoned parking area? Information about obtaining free Visitor Parking Permits is available at <http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/visitorpermits.shtml>.

**Get MPDC News via E-mail.** Register with DC.gov to receive email notifications of all news releases issued by the MPDC. Details at <http://dc.gov/registration/register.asp>.

- ① For a complete list of winter holiday safety tips for shoppers, travelers and when you're at home, visit:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/season/winter.shtml>
- ① If you see someone suspicious casing your alley, call the MPDC's non-emergency number, 3-1-1; if you see a burglary in progress, call 9-1-1. Get details on how to use these numbers at:  
<http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/info/phone/phone.shtml>
- ① For details on how to retrieve stolen property that is recovered by the MPDC, visit:  
<http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/about/units/ecb.shtml>
- ① Learn more about the ECU, including a list of its MPDC members by police district, at:  
<http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/about/units/ecu.shtml>
- ① If you see illegal dumping in progress, call 9-1-1. If you have information that might assist in the investigation of environmental crimes, call ECU at (202) 645-7196.

## DATA BOX

<b>Homicides</b>	as of 12/22/04
◆ 2004: 189	
◆ 2003: 238	
◆ % Change: -19.9%	
◆ Closure Rate: 55.9% (109 closures)	
<b>Adult Arrests</b>	week end. 12/17/04
◆ Total: 834	
◆ Drugs: 182	
◆ Weapons: 19	
◆ Motor Vehicle Theft: 17	
◆ Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 33	
<b>Juvenile Activity</b>	week end. 12/17/04
◆ Arrests: 31	
◆ Curfew Violations: 9	
◆ Truants: 52	
<b>Firearm Recoveries</b>	as of 12/22/04
◆ December: 139	
◆ 2004 Total: 2,026	
<b>Traffic Fatalities</b>	as of 12/22/04
◆ 2004: 43	
◆ 2003: 68	
◆ % Change: -36.8%	

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at [kevin.morison@dc.gov](mailto:kevin.morison@dc.gov). Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

**mpdc.dc.gov**